



[Mao Zedong, 1893-1976](#)

People's Republic

In all the countries of the world, there is division into classes.

The form of study or discipline that enumerates, names, describes, and narrates the changing absolute and relative condition of all the classes is correctly called Political Economy, meaning literally, the arrangement of the classes within the overall polity.

In Marxist terms this study has to be an “ascent from the abstract to the concrete”, or in other words it must make possible a view of the whole social phenomenon as a “unity and struggle of opposites”, at a particular moment in time.

The social classes are formed as a consequence of various modes of production. The study of the bourgeois mode of production in isolation, and the imagined generalisation of its

laws to the entirety of current human experience, and to history, is what is known as (bourgeois) “Economics”. The confinement of political thought within the bounds of bourgeois economics would cripple it and render us incapable of projecting forward in any way, and especially not towards socialism.

Hence revolutionaries from time to time, and with varying degrees of precision and detail, are apt to prepare a balance sheet of the Political Economy at a particular moment in time. This is what Karl Marx did in the “[Class Struggles in France 1848-1850](#)”, and in “[The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte](#)” (1852). These were exemplary calculations, which apart from their practical revolutionary value, served forever after to educate and to re-educate revolutionaries about the facts of class-struggle life.

Mao Zedong’s extraordinary study of the political economy of China in 1939, called “The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party”, is another great example of this kind of exercise (attached; otherwise please click on the first link below and download it).

This piece of writing is about as concentrated and as directly relevant to South Africa as it could be. Here you will find the relationship between Imperialism and the most backward, feudal elements; the role of the national bourgeoisie; the role of the gentry (rich peasant farmers); the concept of “motive force” and many other matters that are crucial in South Africa today.

Note that Mao was not embarrassed to talk of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. This is only one of the differences between the Chinese revolutionaries and their Soviet counterparts of a generation earlier.

The general scheme of rational class alliance aimed towards the construction of a national and democratic republic - what Mao calls the **new-democratic revolution**, is as follows:

*“...in present-day China the bourgeois-democratic revolution is no longer of the old general type, which is now obsolete, but one of a new special type. **We call this type the new-democratic revolution and it is developing in all other colonial and semi-colonial countries as well as in China.** The new-democratic revolution is part of the world proletarian-socialist revolution, for it resolutely opposes imperialism, i.e., international capitalism. **Politically, it strives for the joint dictatorship of the revolutionary classes over the imperialists, traitors and reactionaries, and opposes the transformation of Chinese society into a society under bourgeois dictatorship.** Economically, it aims at the nationalization of all the big enterprises and capital of the imperialists, traitors and reactionaries, and the distribution among the peasants of the land held by the landlords, while preserving private capitalist enterprise in general and not eliminating the rich-peasant economy.”*

Taken together with the piece coming next, which Mao wrote ten years later in the year of the victory of the Chinese

Revolution, 1949, this text allows us to get a sense of the dynamics of plural class formations, and of their ascent and decline in China, and the consequent practical inevitability of the National Democratic Revolution.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party, 1939, Mao Zedong.](#)
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here.](#)